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LETTER DATED 23 MAY 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit the attached communication, dated 22 May 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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Annex

Letter dated 22 May 1996 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1031 (1995) of 15 December 1995, I attach the sixth report on the operations of the multinational implementation force (IFOR). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

We have now entered a new phase of the IFOR mission, following the D+120 (18 April) time-line, and IFOR will continue to concentrate on the maintenance of a secure environment within which other organizations can take forward the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement (see S/1995/999). While I remain concerned that there are a number of outstanding compliance issues, we continue to see a willingness by all the parties to cooperate with IFOR and to implement the Peace Agreement's military annex.

I recently visited Banja Luka to see one of the IFOR multinational divisions. During the visit, I was able to meet with the local political leadership and express support for those who seek to implement the Peace Agreement and its vision of a single multi-ethnic country, two entities peacefully coexisting and elections that are free and fair. In addition, I visited Belgrade and pursued with President Milosevic the pressing importance of continued compliance by the parties with the provisions of the Peace Agreement, including those related to indicted war criminals. While IFOR will do its part on the ground, it is also essential that the international community do its part by applying maximum political pressure on the parties to ensure that they help to create the conditions for peace to endure.

I very much welcome the close cooperation between IFOR and the Office of the High Representative and the various United Nations agencies operating in theatre. Together they play a crucial part in the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Sixth report to the Security Council on the operations of the multinational implementation force

Operations of the multinational implementation force

1. The multinational implementation force (IFOR) comprises approximately 54,200 personnel deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, from all the nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 16 non-NATO contributors. Offers from four additional non-NATO countries are pending. IFOR air assets continue to provide the capability required to secure the air space, defend and support IFOR ground forces, provide support to civilian agencies within mission capabilities and to monitor compliance. IFOR maritime assets also remain deployed in support of IFOR.

2. IFOR has now entered a new phase of Operation "Joint Endeavour" with the passing of the D+120 (18 April) time-line in the military annex to the Peace Agreement (see S/1995/999). In order to provide a secure and stable environment during which the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement will become increasingly important, IFOR retains its primary task of implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement by monitoring, and where necessary ensuring, compliance by the parties with their obligations under annex 1.A. During this period, IFOR forces have been concentrating on the demobilization and the cantonment of air defence systems, heavy weapons and forces from all the parties. It continues to maintain a secure environment by patrolling and surveillance in order to provide overall freedom of movement for IFOR, civilian agencies and non-governmental organizations, as well as the civilian population, including refugées and displaced persons, especially in predicted areas of potential civil disturbance. Ground and aerial surveillance of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line and the Zone of Separation has been maintained as has the continued destruction of bunkers and monitoring of demining operations. IFOR also continues to assist a range of civil organizations, on a case-by-case basis, from available resources without detriment to its primary mission.

3. IFOR maintains its robust capabilities and rules of engagement. These are essential for it to be able to defend itself effectively, display resolve in carrying out its mission and provide area security for others involved in implementing the Peace Agreement. Although some inter-entity tensions have been witnessed by IFOR personnel in recent weeks, the greatest risk to IFOR and others remains the very large number of mines that are scattered throughout Bosnia, including ones recently laid by the civilian population to protect their property. Unfortunately, incidents continue to cause casualties among IFOR personnel and local people.

4. As United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) forces prepare for operations in Eastern Slavonia, arrangements for the provision of close air support have been developed by UNTAES and IFOR.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

5. IFOR will continue to execute its mission in an evenhanded manner. The process of withdrawal of forces and weapon systems to cantonment sites by all the parties, in accordance with annex 1.A to the Peace Agreement, still continues after D+120 (18 April), but this has been hampered by organizational shortcomings. The overall assessment is that:

- The cease-fire continues to hold and the parties remain generally in compliance with the cessation of hostilities;

- Although there has been an increase in the number of armed civilians being detained by IFOR in the Zone of Separation, and both bunker construction activity and the appearance of illegal check points continue, all parties have been generally in compliance with the Zone of Separation and the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. However, there have been a number of reported civil disturbances at crossing points, as displaced persons attempt to visit family, graves or previous homes. Some incidents have caused fatalities. On the other hand, many crossings of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line have taken place without incident and on many occasions tension has been defused effectively by the joint action of IFOR and the civilian agencies. IFOR, the Office of the High Representative, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Police Task Force have recently agreed on a common policy to reduce the risk of civil disturbances resulting from visits across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, which threaten peace and public order. The risk, however, remains of further incidents of this kind over the coming weeks. In this regard the role of the local police remains essential;

- All parties continue to move heavy weapons and forces to agreed cantonment areas and to demobilize forces as was required at D+120 (18 April). It is assessed that the majority of declared heavy and air defence weapons are already in cantonments, but experience has shown that there are numerous discrepancies between declared and actual numbers of weapons, due either to deception or inefficiency in staffing and communications. The discovery of undeclared air defence weapons will result in their confiscation or destruction by IFOR, as it carries out its verification mission. IFOR is continuing to monitor the movement of heavy weapons to approved cantonment sites. Undeclared heavy weapons, discovered by IFOR, or those stored in cantonment sites not approved by IFOR, are being moved to approved sites;

- The situation regarding the true scale of demobilization of forces suggests that none of the parties are in full compliance with the D+120 (18 April) requirements. While there is continued evidence of demobilization proceeding, this has been limited by the need to approve cantonments and the parties' organizational and logistic capabilities. The lack of suitable alternative employment for demobilized personnel remains a resultant concern;

- There has been a substantial reduction in the presence of foreign forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that there are still isolated individuals physically present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and IFOR continues to monitor the situation;

- There has been some further release of prisoners during the period of this report. However, the International Committee of the Red Cross has confirmed that all the parties continue to hold a number of prisoners. Dossiers for only a few have been provided to the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, for possible investigation as war criminals.

6. The Joint Military Commission and its supporting structure of military commissions are operating efficiently. The Inter-Entity Boundary Line Subcommittee met on 8 May and made some progress in adjusting the Inter-Entity Boundary Line, for which revised mapping will be produced. However, disagreements remain in the Posavina, Dobrinja, South Herzegovina and Jajce areas.

7. On 19 April, the North Atlantic Council, following a meeting with the non-NATO IFOR contributors, issued a declaration urging all the parties to honour their commitments, under the Peace Agreement and to cooperate fully with IFOR.

Cooperation with the High Representative and international organizations

8. The civil aspects of the Peace Agreement remain crucial to its success and IFOR will continue to build on the good cooperation that has so far been established with the High Representative's Office and the many and various civilian agencies. It continues to provide as much support to these civilian agencies as its principal tasks and available resources allow.

9. Currently, IFOR is involved in over 300 civil projects, including road, rail and bridge repair and construction and the rebuilding of schools, hospitals and public utilities. It is actively working with UNHCR in its planning for the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons; with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the fields of arms control, confidence-building measures and the provision of appropriate support for the elections and with the International Police Task Force in its task of rebuilding law and order. IFOR continues to provide security and logistic support to the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, as well as aerial surveillance of mass grave sites to which the Tribunal has given priority status.